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"The fundamental idea of forestry is in the perpetuation of the forests by use. Forest protection is not an end in itself; it is a means to increase and sustain the resources of the country and the industries which depend on them."

President Theodore Roosevelt, announcing a program that set aside 132 million acres of public land as forest reserves, 1901

Theodore Roosevelt, the conservationist

by L. H. Pammel

(Editors' Note: This article is reprinted from the 1929 Ames Forester.)

Some years ago, during the first administration of President Roosevelt, I had the pleasure of a short stay in Washington. I was the guest of James Wilson, who was then Secretary of Agriculture.

The Secretary spoke to me and said, "Do you want to meet President Roosevelt?"

I said, "Yes. Nothing would please me more."

The Secretary then made arrangements for me to go to one of his smaller receptions, when only a comparatively few persons were present. It was not a very long contact. Roosevelt met his guests with a broad smile. He struck me as being rather cold and austere and not sympathetic. He met his guests by saying, "I am delighted to see you." To me he said, "You are from Iowa, where Secretary Wilson and Major Lacey come from." A few other questions were put to me—my answers—and that was the end of the contact, except for several addresses I heard him make on conservation and related topics.

It gave me a feeling of satisfaction that I had met a man of such dynamic personality. Many persons thought that he was not sympathetic. He was, however, in reality, sympathetic and democratic, and had a big heart and a big soul. He never stood on ceremonies. He hated sham. He wanted to fill public places with men who were above suspicion, who

looked after the public interests with the same fidelity as their own. He wanted the highest personal service from a public servant.

In his addresses he was the most outstanding and dynamic of all of our presidents. He brought his message home to the common people. We never have had a man in the office of president who has displayed the same dynamic force.

As governor of New York, Colonel of the Rough Riders in Cuba, and as Civil Service Commissioner of New York, and later as President of the United States, he exerted a fine influence for good government and conservation.

I am taking up the life of this man because of his interest in forestry and conservation, subjects which have an important place in the development of our country, and in which, as a young man at Ames, I became deeply interested.

The following view of Roosevelt by William Kennedy, an Englishman, as given in "The Many-Sided Roosevelt," by George William Douglas (William Kennedy was then in New York) is interesting:

"But I say, Senator, that is a very remarkable man, you know. A very remarkable man. And you say he is Governor of New York. That is very surprising, you know. I really can't say that I ever before met exactly such a man. And he seems to be a fighter. I rather like that in him. And you say

he is a writer of high repute, too? Well, by Jove, he is the queerest combination I have ever met."

Because of his virile character, he had the respect of the great men of England, Germany and France.

One evening during the outbreak of the World War, I was waiting for a train in the Union Depot in Cincinnati, Ohio. I fell into conversation with a German-American who lived in that city. Our conversation drifted to the topic of the great men of our country. The German asked me to name the greatest men of our country. I named, of course, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson. He answered by saying that an eminent German in a recent trip to this country had been asked that question, and he had placed Theodore Roosevelt and Andrew Jackson before Washington. I asked him why, and he said, "Roosevelt was a man of action."

The success of Roosevelt in the movements in which he became interested was due to his dynamic force. He was a successful sportsman because it required action. He was a good rancher because he brought action into the game. He was a good assistant to the county sheriff in South Dakota because he brought his best talents into his work.

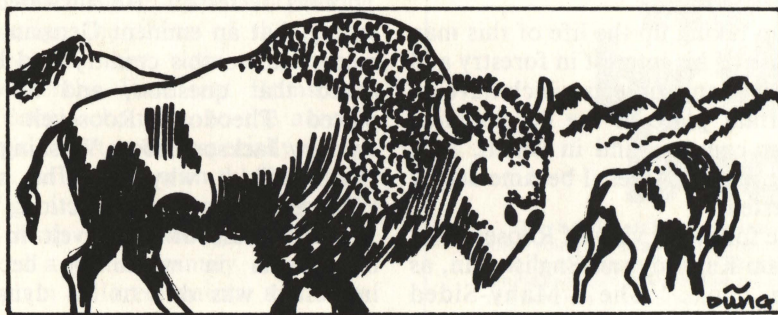
He was a great president because there was no sham. He wanted an honest administration. If he wanted something done in the way of reform,

he found a way to do it. There were no provisions in our Constitution or our land laws to protect our public domain. He reversed the previous policy of looking after the public domain. The Forest Service found that valuable coal lands were in danger of passing into private hands, and when Gifford Pinchot called his attention to this matter, he withdrew from entry some 68,000,000 acres of coal land. He established the policy that whatever is not expressly forbidden by the Constitution or law could be used by the executive. It saved a great deal of our public domain.

It is not often that the chief executive of a nation has to his credit many fine literary and historical contributions, but Roosevelt has many. Let me mention: "The Life of Oliver Cromwell," "The Winning of the West" (1889) (in which he has given us a splendid account of the development of our country—his fine style is shown in his autobiography (1913, page 647). In it he gives many intimate views of ranch life, hunting and cowboy experiences), "History as Literature," and "Through the Brazilian Wilderness." The book, "Through the Brazilian Wilderness," is most fascinating. The many sidedness of Roosevelt may be seen from the fine account of animals, the topography and other points given by Roosevelt which stamp him as one of the unique explorers.

masses of these buffalo could be seen. "It took several days for these herds to pass. To the very verge of the horizon the brown masses of buffalo bands showed through the dust clouds, coming on with a thunderous roar like that of surf. Camp was a mile away, and the stampede luckily passed to one side of it. Watching his chance, he finally dodged back to the tent, and all that afternoon watched the immense masses of buffalo, as band after band tore to the brink of the bluff on one side, raced down, then rushed through the water up the bluff on the other side, again off over the plain churning the sandy, shallow stream into a ceaseless tumult." This great roar from the herd continued through the night. An apparently endless stream of animals.

He tells us that when we became a nation in 1776, the buffalo was the first large animal to vanish. It was pushed farther and farther westward. It was Roosevelt's pleasure to have shot a buffalo in 1889 in Idaho, just south of the Montana boundary line. It pleased him greatly. All of this great hunting ground was known to him. In the fall of 1889 he spent much time hunting on the headwaters of the Salmon and Snake Rivers. Even 12 years later when I was in this Idaho country, especially between the boundary between the Bitterroot Valley and the headwaters of the above stream in the Clear-water country, there was much fine game.



Theodore Roosevelt, in the fascinating story, "Hunting the Grizzly," and other sketches (an account of the big game of the United States), gives his own experience in hunting the buffalo (p. 7-34) and recounts the untold herds which were found in this country. General W. H. Walker of Virginia told him that on the Upper Arkansas River, great

Roosevelt's accounts of hunting are especially interesting. The book, "Hunting Trips of a Ranchman," is full of interesting stories concerning the wild game of the West, particularly when he was there on a ranch. For instance, there is a splendid account of water fowl, discussing the stalking of wild geese; and there is an account of the beaver,

snow-goose, ducks, mallards, curlews and prong-horn antelopes. The latter is a product of the prairie. There are also accounts of the white-tailed deer, or the deer of the river bottom, and the black-tailed deer; and that splendid account of the lordly buffalo, the destruction of which he considers a tragedy.

The account of the elk is also interesting, especially the hardships he endured in trying to find this splendid animal of the Rocky Mountain. The grizzly bear story of Old Ephraim is very interesting.

The collection made by Theodore Roosevelt's party on the African trip was highly lauded by Congressman Mann, and the Director of the Smithsonian Institution. This interesting expedition was begun in 1909 and ended in 1910.

While Governor of the State of New York, he became interested in the subject of conservation. In his annual message of January, 1909, he said on conservation:

"Hardy out-of-doors sports like hunting are in themselves of no small value to the national character and should be encouraged in every way."

"A primeval forest is a great sponge which absorbs and distills rain water, and when it is destroyed, the result is apt to be an alternative of flood and drought.

"We need to have our system of forestry gradually developed and conducted along scientific principles, but until lumbering is thus conducted on strictly scientific principles, no less than upon the principle of the strictest honesty toward the state, we cannot afford to suffer it at all in the state forests. Unrestrained greed means the ruin of the great woods and a drying up of the sources of the river."

The subject of forestry is intimately connected with conservation. Mr. Roosevelt had the constant advice of Gifford Pinchot, who has done so much for forestry in this country.

The history of the forestry movement in his administration is this: when Roosevelt became President of the United States, the forestry service was a small growing organization under the direction of Gifford Pinchot. Roosevelt says, "... occupied mainly with laying the foundation of American forestry

by scientific study of the forests, and with the promotion of forests on private lands. It contained all the trained foresters in the Government service, but had charge of no public timberland whatsoever. The Government forest reserves of that day were in the care of a Division in the General Land Office, under the management of clerks wholly without the knowledge of forestry, few if any of whom had ever seen a foot of timberlands for which they were responsible. Thus the reserves were neither well protected nor well used. There were no foresters among the men who had charge of the national forests and on government forests in charge of the government foresters."

He maintained that the conservation movement must be linked up with forestry. He therefore appointed the Inland Waterways Commission on March 14, 1907 and in the letter to the commission spoke of the great value of streams to the national welfare.

He was asked to summon a conference of governors to consider the natural resources of this country. He did so. This commission was to make an inventory of all of the natural resources of the country and well did it do its work.

The germ of the idea of this conference was expressed by President Roosevelt in an address before the Society of American Foresters (of which he was an associate member). He said: "Your attention must be directed to the preservation of the forests, not as an end in itself, but as a means of preserving the prosperity of the Nation. . . . In the arid region of the West agriculture depends first of all upon the available water supply. In such a region forest protection alone can maintain the stream flow necessary for irrigation and can prevent the great and destructive floods so ruinous to communities farther down the streams. . . . The relation between forests and the whole mineral industry is an extremely intimate one. The very existence of lumbering . . . depends upon the success of our work as a nation in putting practical forestry into effective operation. As it is with

mining and lumbering, so it is in only a less degree with transportation, manufacturers and commerce in general. The relation of all these industries to forestry is of the most intimate and dependent kind.

The President at this conference, made this statement: "Disregarding for the moment the question of moral purpose, it is safe to say that the prosperity of our people depends directly on the energy and intelligence with which our natural resources are used. It is equally clear that these resources are the final basis of national power and perpetuity. Finally, it is ominously evident that these resources are in the course of rapid exhaustion."

Theodore Roosevelt became so impressed with the subject of conservation and its importance, not only to the United States but the world at large, that he called an international conference on conservation; because, he said, it was not a local but an international problem.

He delegated his friend Gifford Pinchot to present the petition to the different nations of the world, and in response to this petition, the conference met on February 19, 1909.

The report of the National Conservation Commission was the first inventory of our resources and is a most interesting document. The report was needed because it brought squarely before the public information on needed legislation. The Commission recommended that the government should retain title to all minerals, including coal oil; that it should lease for fixed sums such lands when deemed best.

In his special message to the Senate and the House of Representatives, January 22, 1909, in which he submitted a report on the National Conservation Commission, he makes this statement in urging conservation work because of enormous loss to the country: "The function of our Government is to insure to all its citizens, now and hereafter, their rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If we of this generation destroy the resources from which our children would otherwise derive their livelihood, we reduce the capacity of our land to support a population, and so either degrade the standard of

living or deprive the coming generations of their right to life on this continent."

"All this is simply good common sense. The underlying principle of conservation has been described as the application of common sense to common problems for the common good. If the description is correct, then conservation is the great fundamental basis for national efficiency."

A matter that interested Theodore Roosevelt greatly was rural life. He was firmly convinced that we must, as a nation, plant our feet firmly on mother earth, and that, as a nation, we will never make much progress unless we give agriculturists every opportunity for education and the best homes and privileges.

In order to have a thorough study made, he appointed a Country Life Commission in August, 1908. This commission consisted of the ablest men that he could find in the country. Dr. L. H. Bailey of Cornell University, Henry Wallace of Wallace's Farmer of Des Moines, and President Kenyon R. Butterfield of the Massachusetts Agricultural College. Also he got advice from Sir Horace Plunkett of Ireland, and subsequently Garfield and Pinchot helped this commission to work out a rural life problem.

The service of President Roosevelt to Forestry and Conservation was larger than that of any other President of the United States. The Conservation and Forestry interests of this country will always owe him a debt of gratitude.

